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News and Views

from the Farm Management Staff

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE
Division of Agricultural Economics Programs
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Dear Farm Management Extension Workers:

Farm and Home Management Team Teach in Regional Summer School

Editor's note: Since many of you are involved in training county agents, we thought that you would be particularly interested in this summary of a letter sent in by Arthur Peterson, farm management specialist of Washington State. It seems to us that it brings out several very important points; e.g., the positive attitude of these agents toward this work, the recognition that much new subject matter is involved with this method, which must be mastered simultaneously before one is competent to use or teach the method to others, etc. I'm sure that Art Peterson and Lila Dickerson would appreciate letters from you regarding your experiences along this line.

Arthur Peterson and Mrs. Lila Dickerson of the Washington State Extension Service taught the course in farm and home development at the Western Regional Extension Summer School at Fort Collins, Colorado, this year. They have worked together doing training work in their own State program of farm and home planning since 1953.

Eighty-one students were enrolled in the course at Fort Collins. Twenty-eight were women. Most of the students were county agricultural agents or home demonstration agents.

The general objectives of the course were to assist those attending in developing a better understanding of farm and home planning, to demonstrate how it could be used, to practice its use so far as time permitted, and to explore some of its possibilities as a "method of Extension."

During the course a number of interesting things were brought out. One was that those attending were asking "how to do the job," and not "should they do it." Another was the fact that this method involves new subject matter having to do with the nature of the process that county agents learn and in turn teach farm families. In addition, it involves the visualization and development of regular subject matter in new forms and within a new frame of reference. Both of these things take time and require considerable special attention from both administrative and subject matter people.

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These matters of time and special attention lead to problems of program planning. The students at Fort Collins gave considerable thought to this and tested out their ideas by means of laboratory exercises preparing plans of work.

The extent to which farm and home development is a method rather than a service was studied. In this the students brought out the need for continually evaluating the way in which they do farm and home planning so that it will be an educational method useful to many, rather than a service limited to a few families.

One of the most important ideas brought out in the course was that this method largely deals with teaching a process of analysis rather than the making of recommendations. Many extension folks find this a difficult idea to accept because of past methods they have used. Many of them feel that it is a mark of inadequacy not to come up with a positive answer and a recommendation in answer to questions raised by farm families. The art of asking questions in return and thereby providing guidance to the farm family process of "do-it-yourself" analysis is not as well developed as it might be. In fact, the better we understand this fundamental characteristic of educational work the better our application of the farm and home development method will be.

At the end of the term the students filled out a questionnaire expressing their appraisal of the course. Although Art and Lila have given no publicity to the results, we have it from a number of excellent sources that the students were very well pleased with the course and with the help they received from the Washington State farm and home planning team.

Some Changes in National Income Tax and Social Security Legislation Affecting Farmers

Nearly all farmers realized some benefit from the gasoline tax refund under a law enacted April 2, 1956. Recovery of the 2-cent tax paid during the first half of 1956 is now in process. Farmers must file Form 2240 not later than October 1. Recovery of the present 3-cent tax will be claimed after June 30, 1957.

Farmers who sold or exchanged certain livestock on account of drought in 1956, and who repurchase dairy or breeding stock within a year, may elect to handle this as an involuntary conversion under Public Law 629, Sec. 5, approved June 29. This operates like Sec. 1033(e) Livestock Destroyed by Disease.

Social Security Amendments of 1956, Public Law 880, approved August 1, 1956, enlarges farmer participation in the program, provides more disability benefits, lowers retirement age for women, and increases rate of contribution from 1957 income. Owners or tenants who rent out land and participate to a material degree in the management decisions or physical work of farming are now included in the OASI program; cash or crop-share income from such operation will be treated as earned income. The option is now two-thirds of gross income from \$600 to \$1,800, and is available to all farmers including partners. Crew leaders are deemed to be employers of the workers they furnish. After 1956, agricultural workers will be covered when they earn \$150 or work 20 or more days for cash wages on a time basis for one employer. Drop-out of 5 years of low earnings is now available if that increases average earnings as computed for determination of benefits. "All but four of the quarters since 1954, but not less than six," is added to the ways of earning "fully insured" status. Other items too numerous to mention are included in these amendments.

Some Proposed Changes Not Approved. Many itinerant workers are not included under OASI. No change was made relative to turpentine workers; they are not included under the OASI program. A doctor of medicine or Christian Science practitioner is not included. Rental income is not included if separate from material participation in management or operation of farm. No change in \$400 minimum or \$4,200 maximum for self employed.

No extension of time was granted for construction of grain storage facilities qualifying for 5-year amortization plan in regard to income taxes; December 31, 1956, is the last day for any construction to come under this provision.

States Are Active in Helping Farmers with Soil Bank Decisions

Good educational materials to help farmers make soil bank decisions continue to come in from the field. We appreciate receiving copies of your materials of this sort so that we may learn from them as well as show others what you are doing.

We know that many of you are carrying out active educational programs. Recently, we received copies of materials developed by George Stevens in Maryland that look well designed and to the point. The approach is to analyze typical farm set-ups and budget out the change in net cash income resulting from participation. In connection with the 1956 programs for corn and tobacco, 13 county meetings were held with an attendance of 936 farmers. The latest materials developed deal with the problem of whether to put wheat land into the 1957 acreage reserve.

You Should See

Questions and Answers About Farm and Home Development. In this four-page pamphlet Leonard Kyle, farm management specialist at Michigan State University, treats many of the questions that are frequently asked by agents and others. In addition to treating the necessary over-all questions we particularly like the treatment of such things as the advantage and disadvantage of group work.

Low Income Farmers in Good Farming Areas of Missouri. Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 668, March 1956. In this bulletin Herbert F. Lionberger makes a careful analysis of the lower income farmers in the areas studied, and explores the reasons for their low income as well as the factors conditioning improvement. This bulletin tends to remind us that low income farmers are not confined to certain areas of the country.

What Size of Farm in the Years Ahead? * Mimeograph, ARS-U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C. We think you will find this treatment by Sherman Johnson and Kenneth Bachman of this provocative topic very worth-while reading.

The Long-Run Demand for Farm Products, by Rex F. Daly. * Reprinted from the "Economics Research Journal." This report of research provides us with a very useful tool to use in evaluating the future and in building programs in light of it.

Our Farm Production Plan and Budget for Next Year, 4-H Circular No. 135, Columbia, Missouri. In this circular Paul H. Bebermeyer, farm management specialist in Missouri, outlines a farm management 4-H Club project. Paul reports that this project is being used in two counties at the present time.

A Comparative Study of Two Systems of Dairy Barn Operations. That is the title of an article by R. Lee Chambliss, Jr., in the May issue of Virginia Farm Economics. It reports in detail on comparative investments and labor requirements associated with a large stanchion barn and a milking parlor-loose housing system of comparable size.
*Limited number of copies enclosed.

Briefly, two men were able in the milking parlor-loose housing system, to do the work of three in the stanchion barn. The milking parlor-loose housing system had the advantage that it cost less than half as much. But Chambliss recognizes that most farmers aren't starting from scratch. Most of them have stanchion barns. Here the question is whether conversion to the milking parlor-loose housing system would pay. He demonstrates a practical, partial-budget method of deciding on that question.

If you don't find a copy of Virginia Farm Economics, May issue, in your files or library, we suggest that you write Chambliss for a copy. He is Associate Agricultural Economist, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Will Meat-Type Hogs Pay. Mimeographed Circular No. 434, South Dakota State College. Lyle M. Bender, Farm Management Specialist, and Edward Dailey, Livestock Marketing Specialist, present an analysis of this problem that effectively combines both production and economic aspects.

Trends in the Poultry Industry - Effects on the Midwest. University of Wisconsin, Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 523. This regional publication of the North Central Regional Poultry Marketing Project treats the topic thoroughly, winding up with a very fine look ahead.

In Regional Cooperatives in Agriculture, Mimeo #835 of the Iowa Extension Service, Frank Robotka explains the functions, and relationships of regional cooperatives to local associations. Good statement on cooperative principles.

Personnel Changes

... Marion N. Williamson, Jr. (Newt) has joined the Texas extension staff at College Station as economist in farm management. Mr. Williamson has had experience in Government and industry and in agricultural economics research (at Texas A&M), and has his course work for a PhD at Harvard. Clyde R. Weathers is a new extension farm management specialist at North Carolina State College at Raleigh. A former vo-ag teacher, Mr. Weathers has done graduate work at North Carolina State and served as a graduate assistant in the Department of Agricultural Economics. Cecil D. Maynard has been appointed associate farm management specialist in the Oklahoma Extension Service. Mr. Maynard has been assistant State supervisor in the Veterans Agricultural Training Program, employed by the State Board for Vocational Education and located at the Oklahoma A&M College at Stillwater. Dr. Phillip Henderson has been appointed as extension economist at Nebraska. Dr. Henderson has been manager of the University of Nebraska development farms and will now devote about 60 percent of his time to farm management extension. Ed Smith, farm management extension specialist at Pennsylvania, has accepted a position with the Production Economics Research Branch, U.S.D.A. Ed will be stationed in Washington, and will be working on costs and returns from poultry farms in the Northeast. Richard Ford, who was working in farm and home development in New Jersey, has joined the Federal Extension Service in Washington, D.C. Dick will be in the General Economics Branch of this Division, giving particular attention to the development of outlook work.

Sincerely yours,

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